

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Initially, applicant notes an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) was filed in the present application on October 13, 2004. At this time applicant has not received confirmation of consideration of the references cited in that IDS. For convenience a copy of that IDS is submitted herein, along with its date-stamped filing receipt. Applicant respectfully requests confirmation of consideration of the references cited in that IDS by returning to applicants an initialed form PTO-1449.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15, 17, and 23-26 are pending in this application. Claims 18-22 are canceled by the present response without prejudice. Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 13, 15, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 4,618,150 to Kimura in view of U.S. patent 6,811,273 to Satoh et al. (herein "Satoh"). Claims 11, 12, and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Kimura as applied to claims 1, 5, 9, and 13, and further in view of JP 07-124290 to Nobuo and JP2000-011725 to Hitoshi et al. (herein "Hitoshi").

Applicant and applicant's representative also wish to thank Examiner Collins and Kim for the interview granted applicant's representative on October 20, 2005. During the interview the outstanding rejections were discussed in detail. Further, during the interview claim amendments as presented herein were discussed. Further, applicant's representative presented positions to how the amended claims distinguish over the applied art. The Examiners tentatively agreed with that position but indicated that an additional search would have to be conducted in view of a filed response.

Addressing the above-noted rejections, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

Applicant initially notes each of the claims is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. Specifically, each of the independent claims now further recites:

a reflecting cover set in the end portion of the first side display unit and configured to allow light emitted from the back light to directly illuminate the symbols, the reflecting cover including one end connected to a bottom of the front side display unit and an unconnected free end[.]

The above-noted feature is believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

Previously pending claims 19-22 recited a “reflecting cover”. With respect to those claims the outstanding rejection cited Hitoshi disclosing the use of a reflecting sheet 43. However, applicant respectfully submits the claims as currently written distinguish over that previous grounds for rejection.

First, the claims as currently written now recite a more specific structure of the “reflecting cover”. Specifically, the claims as currently written now further clarify that the reflecting cover includes “one end connected to a bottom of the front side display unit and an unconnected free end”. That subject matter is fully supported for example by Figure 36 in the present specification. As shown for example in Figure 36 in the present specification a reflecting cover 2f includes one end connected to a bottom of the front side display unit 5 and has an unconnected free end.

In contrast to the claimed structure, Hitoshi shows in Figure 7 therein utilizing two reflectors 46 that substantially surround the lamps 44.

In contrast to Hitoshi, and again with reference to Figure 36 in the present specification as a non-limiting example, the cold cathode fluorescent lamp (CCFL) 2e is positioned at the bottom of a scattering panel 504. A reflecting cover 2f has a U-shaped cross-section, with one end connected to a bottom of the panel display unit 5 for example by

a lower boss 2c' and a free end that is unconnected, so as to incompletely surround the lamp 2e.

With such a structure, when light at the basic end side emitted from the lamp 2e enters the light guide panel 503, the light is guided by the light guide panel 503 and is diffusively reflected by the scattering panel 504 to illuminate the LCD panel 501. In contrast when light at the free end side emitted from the lamp 2e enters a space between the panel display unit 5 and the reflecting cover 2f, the light can indirectly illuminate symbols displayed on reels 3R, 3C, 3L. Thus, in the present invention with the use of such a reflector panel both direct and indirect lighting can be realized.

Hitoshi does not have such a structure. In detail, Hitoshi discloses in Figure 7 a sheet-like light emitting device 40 including a pair of light guiding panels 41, 42, a reflecting sheet 43, a pair of lamps 44, 45, and a pair of lamp reflectors 46, 47. The sheet-like light emitting device 40 is mounted on a back surface of a central panel 31. The light guiding panels 41, 42 are connected to each other via the reflecting sheet 43. The lamp 44 is positioned at a top of the light guiding panels 41, 42. The lamp 45 is positioned at the bottom of the light guiding panels 41, 42. The lamp reflector 46 has a U-shaped cross-section, one end connected to the top of the light guiding panel and the other end connected to the top of the light guiding panel 42, so as to substantially completely surround the lamp 44. Similarly, the lamp reflector 47 has a U-shaped cross-section, one end connected the bottom of the light guiding panel 41 and the other end connected to the bottom of the light guiding panel 42, so as to also substantially completely surround the lamp 45.

With such a structure in Hitoshi when light emitted from the lamps 44, 45 enters the light guiding panel 41, the light is guided by the light guiding panel 41 and is diffusively reflected by the reflecting sheet 43 to illuminate the central panel 31. Also, when light emitted from the lamps 44, 45 enters the light guiding panel 42, the light is guided by the

light guiding panel 42 and is diffusively reflected by the reflecting sheet 43 to illuminate symbols displayed on the reel 34.

The claimed invention has a contrary structure such as in Hitoshi.

In contrast to Hitoshi, in the claims as currently written only one end of the reflecting cover is connected to a display panel, the other end being an unconnected free end, to incompletely surround the back light with the reflecting cover and the panel display unit. With such a structure in the present invention a number of parts can be significantly decreased to reduce the manufacturing costs of a gaming apparatus because light emitted from a back light directly illuminates symbols displayed on the reels.

Further, with such a claimed structure, when light at the end side of the reflector 2f is reflected from the lamp 2e and enters the light guiding panel 503, the light is guided by the light guiding panel 503 and is diffusively reflected by the scattering panel 504 to illuminate the LCD panel 501. In contrast, when light reflected from the free end side of the reflector 2f from the lamp 2e enters a space between the panel display unit 5 and the reflecting cover 2f, the light can directly illuminate symbols displayed on reels 3R, 3C, 3L.

In such ways, the claims as currently written are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

The present response also sets forth new dependent claims 23-26 for examination, that are believed to even further distinguish over the applied art. For example new dependent claims 23 and 25 further recite that the display unit includes an LCD display and a light guiding panel configured to allow light emitted from the back light to illuminate the LCD display. Further, new dependent claims 24 and 26 further recite the display unit includes a light guiding panel configured to allow light emitted from the back light to illuminate the display. Such subject matter is fully support for example in Figure 37 in the present specification showing the displayed unit 5 including a protection glass 500, an LCD panel

501, a light guiding panel 503, a scattering panel 504, and a frame 505. The panel display 5 is mounted on a back surface of cabinet 2. The protection glass 500, the LCD panel 501, the light guiding panel 503, and the scattering panel 504 are stacked in the sorter and can constitute a multiple layer panel 5', which for example can be clamped by a frame 505.

Such features recite in new claims 23-26 are believed to even further distinguish over the applied art.

In view of these foregoing comments, applicant respectfully submits the claims as currently written distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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